

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element having a bone contacting surface and having~~with~~ at least one opening for receiving a fixation element, said opening having ~~internal surfaces including~~ a recessed outwardly facing surface around the opening, said recessed outwardly facing surface tapering towards the bone contacting surface from a first to a second smaller cross-section and an insert that may be inserted in the opening wherein the insert exhibits an external form that is generally complementary to the recessed outwardly facing surface and to an internal surface of the opening extending from the second smaller cross-section toward the bone contacting surface in a direction parallel to a central axis of the opening~~of the receptacle for engagement therewith~~ and wherein the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, and in which the implantable orthopedic device exhibits a means for holding the insert in the opening~~receptacle~~ wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism which conformingly locks with the internal surface of the opening~~load bearing element~~.

2. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert or the locking mechanism has at least one extension that goes along one side of the insert.

3. (original) The device as set forth in claim 2 wherein the extension is configured in a flexible manner in the standard direction or inclined to the principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis and/or that the extension includes a groove running in the principal plane of the load-bearing element.

4. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the locking mechanism include at least one projection extending away from the central through-bore and intended for engagement with the load-bearing element.

5. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the locking mechanisms can be fixed against the load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the load bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.

6. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism which can interact with a complementary area in the area of the underside of the load-bearing element.

7. (original) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the underside of the load-bearing element, in which the locking mechanisms can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the aforementioned underside.

8. (original) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the locking mechanism can be engaged under the underside of the load-bearing element so that the insert extends beyond the aforementioned underside and acts as a spacer.

9. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side

of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

10. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in the longitudinal direction.

11. (currently amended) A bone stabilization device comprising:

an elongated bone plate having a plurality of apertures extending through the bone plate, said aperture having a recessed-outwardly-facing surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from a larger cross-section at an upper surface of said load-bearing element to a smaller cross-section, and sidewalls forming the aperture, ~~said sidewalls extending perpendicularly to~~ from a bone contacting surface ~~from~~ to the smaller cross-section of the recessed-outwardly-facing surface and at least one insert having a body with a threaded bore and an outer surface for engaging said sidewalls and said recessed surface of said aperture, at least part of said aperture is surrounded by a locking surface and said insert outer surface having a resilient extension for engaging said locking surface.

12. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein said aperture has a central axis extending from a top plate surface to a bottom plate surface and said bore in said insert has a central axis inclined with respect to said aperture central axis.

13. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein the aperture is in the form of an elongate slot.

14. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 13 wherein said insert has an elongate outer surface for placement adjacent an elongate inner surface of said slot and said resilient extension extends between said adjacent surfaces.

15. (previously presented) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 14 wherein said locking surface is a ledge formed around at least part of said aperture inner surface and said resilient extension has an outwardly extending lip for engaging said ledge.

16. (new) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element, having a bone contacting surface and an opposite upper surface and at least one opening between said two surfaces, at least one fixation element, and at least one insert exhibiting a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, wherein said at least one opening of the load-bearing element comprises internal surfaces including side walls perpendicular to and intersecting the bone contacting surface and a recessed surface extending from the side walls tapering outwardly to the upper surface of the load-bearing element, wherein said insert is insertable in said opening and exhibits an external form that is generally complementary to the internal surfaces of the opening for engagement therewith and at least one locking mechanism which conformingly locks the load-bearing element in the opening.

17. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert or the locking mechanism has at least one extension that goes along a first side of the insert.

18. (new) The device as set forth in claim 17 wherein the extension is configured in a flexible manner in the standard direction or inclined to the principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis and/or that the extension includes a groove running in the principal plane of the load-bearing element.

19. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the locking mechanism includes at least one projection extending away from the central through-bore and intended for engagement with the load-bearing element.

20. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16, wherein the locking mechanisms can be fixed against the load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the load bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.

21. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism which can interact with a complementary area in the area of the underside of the load-bearing element.

22. (new) The device as set forth in claim 21 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the underside of the load-bearing element, in which the locking mechanisms can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the aforementioned underside.

23. (new) The device as set forth in claim 21 wherein the locking mechanism can be engaged under the underside of the

load-bearing element so that the insert extends beyond the aforementioned underside and acts as a spacer.

24. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

25. (new) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in the longitudinal direction.

26. (new) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element with at least one opening for receiving a fixation element, the opening having internal surfaces including a recessed surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from an upper surface of the load-bearing element towards a bone contacting surface and an insert that may be inserted in the opening wherein the insert exhibits an external form that is generally complementary to the internal surface of the opening for engagement therewith and wherein the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the fixation element, and in which the implantable orthopedic device exhibits a means for holding the insert in the opening wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism with which conformingly locks the load-bearing element in the opening.